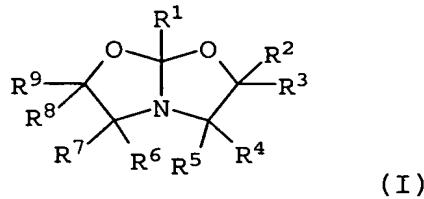


IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A process for post-crosslinking a water-absorbing polymer, which process comprises treating said polymer ~~being treated~~ with a postcrosslinker and, during or after said treating, ~~being postcrosslinked and dried postcrosslinking and drying~~ by temperature elevation, said postcrosslinker being a compound of the a formula  $\pm$  (I)



wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup>, R<sup>5</sup>, R<sup>6</sup>, R<sup>7</sup>, R<sup>8</sup> and R<sup>9</sup> are each independently hydrogen, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>12</sub>-alkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>12</sub>-alkenyl, or C<sub>6</sub>-C<sub>12</sub>-aryl, wherein C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>12</sub>-alkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>12</sub>-alkenyl, or C<sub>6</sub>-C<sub>12</sub>-aryl may be halogen substituted.

2. (Currently amended) A The process as per of claim 1, wherein said postcrosslinker is of the formula  $\pm$  (I) wherein R<sup>1</sup> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>-alkyl, C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>-alkenyl, or C<sub>6</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>-aryl, R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>4</sup>, R<sup>6</sup> and R<sup>8</sup> are each independently hydrogen, and R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>5</sup>, R<sup>7</sup> and R<sup>9</sup> are each independently hydrogen, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl, or C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkenyl, wherein C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl or C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkenyl may be fluorine substituted.

3. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The process as per of claim 1, wherein said postcrosslinker is 1-aza-4,6-dioxabicyclo[3.3.0]octane.

4. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The process ~~according to any of claims~~ claim 1 to 3, wherein said polymer to be postcrosslinked ~~is a polymer which contains structural units which are derived from acrylic acid or acrylic esters or which were~~ is obtained by graft copolymerization of acrylic acid or acrylic esters onto a water-soluble polymeric matrix.

5. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The process ~~according to any of claims~~ claim 1 to 4, wherein said postcrosslinker is a surface postcrosslinker which is used as a solution in an inert solvent.

6. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The process ~~according to~~ of claim 5, wherein said inert solvent comprises an aqueous solution of glycerol, methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, ethylene glycol, 1,2-propanediol, and/or 1,3-propanediol, or mixtures thereof.

7. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The process ~~according to one or more of claims~~ claim 1 to 6, 5 wherein said inert solvent is water or a mixture of water with a mono- or a polyfunctional alcohol which has an alcohol content in the range from 10% to 90% by weight.

8. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The process according to one or more of claims claim 1 to 7, wherein said postcrosslinker is used in an amount from 0.01% to 5% by weight, based on the weight of said polymer.

9. (Currently amended) ~~Water absorbing A~~ water-absorbing polymer ~~obtainable as per prepared by~~ the process of claims claim 1 to 8.

10. (Currently amended) ~~Water absorbing A~~ water-absorbing polymer ~~according to of~~ claim 8, characterized by an absorbency under load (AUL) at 0.7 psi (4830 Pa) of at least 15 g/g.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (New) A hygiene article comprising a water-absorbing polymer prepared by the process of claim 1.

13. (New) A packaging material comprising a water-absorbing polymer prepared by the process of claim 1.